Lebanon

The Islamic Jihad for the Liberation of Palestine (IJLP) offered to release U.S. "spy" Alan Steen in exchange for the release of 100 prisoners held in Israeli jails, AFP reported. In a statement to a local newspaper, the IJLP said it was taking this initiative for "humanitarian" reasons as Steen's health is deteriorating rapidly and "he could die in 10 days." The terrorist group urged the United States to arrange the prisoner exchange, adding that it is ready to list the prisoners it wants released and suggest a means and place of exchange. However, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir rejected the offer in a statement reported by IDF radio, describing it as "extortion" and affirming that Israel will not negotiate with the IJLP.

In another hostage development, the Organization of Revolutionary Justice (ORJ) released a videocassette of French hostage Jean Louis Normandin, who urged the French Government to "do something" to save him, though he said he is not in danger of execution for the time being, according to Beirut radio. Regarding the fate of Terry Waite, a Tehran radio report from Beirut asserted that the Archbishop of Canterbury's envoy was taken hostage by the ORJ and accused of espionage. However, the radio subsequently disclosed that an anonymous caller on behalf of the ORJ denied any ORJ involvement in Waite's kidnapping. Meanwhile, PSP leader Walid Junblatt described as "accurate and reliable" the *Literaturnaya Gazeta* story that Waite is being held in the Iranian Embassy, Voice of Lebanon radio reported.

The UAE agency WAM cited an *Al-Ittihad* report that the Syrians have ordered Hizballah to vacate the Shaykh 'Abdallah barracks in Ba'labakk by early next week. The former Lebanese Army barracks was taken over by Hizballah in 1983 and has been used as a jail for hostages, WAM noted.

Chadian Conflict

The Chadian Foreign Ministry called on Sudan to "assume its responsibilities" after Libyan forces based in Sudan attacked Chadian areas on 21 and 22 March, Ndjamena radio announced. In a press communique, the Foreign Ministry claimed the Libyan troops in Sudan are being redeployed toward the south directly threatening Chad's security, adding that "the Chadian Army will be allowed to pursue the aggressors wherever they may find refuge."

Sudanese Prime Minister Al-Sadiq al-Mahdi condemned Libya's interference on Sudanese territory, stressing that if Sudan cannot protect its borders politically through a policy of cooperation and good-neighborliness, "then we must deal with the state of affairs militarily," SUNA reported. According to Al-Mahdi, the Libyan forces arrived in Sudan with a relief convoy without "permission," and then instead of withdrawing to the north, moved west to attack Chad. Al-Mahdi also warned that "a deterioration of security in Chad will involve Sudan in security problems."

JANA's political editor denied Libyan forces are in Sudan, but acknowledged the presence of Revolutionary Democratic Council forces and "some other Chadian detachments." The editor maintained Al-Mahdi's statements were falsely reported by "imperialist forces and their lackeys in the area, primarily the treacherous Egyptian regime" to sow dissent between the two countries, JANA reported.

As for the situation in northern Chad, Libyan aircraft bombed Ouadi Doum 23 March following its capture by Chadian forces the previous day, according to Chadian Embassy officials cited by AFP. No details on the extent of the attack were given, except that one Libyan MiG fighter was shot down. Two MiG-21 aircraft were among weapons captured in the taking of Ouadi Doum, Ndjamena radio reported.

DRA-Pakistan

Afghan aircraft bombed Kurram Agency headquarters in Pakistan 23 March, killing 51 persons and wounding more than 100, Karachi radio reported. Another Afghan air raid killed 22 people and injured 26 in South Waziristan, the radio said, noting that 11 Pakistanis were among the dead.

Iran-Iraq War

Iraqi aircraft attacked Cyrus oil field for a second time on 23 March, setting it on fire, according to an Iraqi military communique carried by Voice of the Masses radio. The planes also hit Ardeshir oil field and its loading platforms, and Khark Island's western jetty. A "giant" tanker was hit and set ablaze off Khark Island, the communique said.

Iran-USSR

The Soviet news agency TASS denied a U.S. television report that the USSR has secret electronic reconnaissance stations in Iran. According to TASS, the manufacture of this "sensation" shows a U.S. desire to "complicate" the Soviet Union's relations with countries in and near the Persian Gulf.

Egypt-USSR

The Soviet Union has agreed to postpone the repayment of Egyptian debts to the USSR for 25 years, MENA disclosed in a report on the economic protocol signed in Moscow 20 March. Egyptian Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Butrus Ghali stated that the protocol will give new impetus to the extension of bilateral ties, TASS noted.

Jordan and the PLO

Jordanian Foreign Minister Tahir al-Masri warned that the PLO's abrogation of the 1985 Amman accord could result in the failure of all efforts to peacefully resolve the Palestinian issue, Radio Monte Carlo reported. However, Al-Masri said he does not believe that PLO leader Yasir 'Arafat will abrogate the agreement.

FBIS **DAILY REPORT**

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Commentary Assails Reagan's 'Hostile Statement'
LD232327 Kabul Domestic Service in Dari
1600 GMT 23 Mar 87

[Unattributed BIA political commentary]

[Text] In continuation of his usual anti-Afghan and anti-Soviet policy, on 21 March U.S. President Ronald Reagan once again personally came out on the anti-Afghan propaganda battlefield and in his hostile statement particularly stressed support of anti-DRA Government extremists.

In questioning the objective of this illegal, entirely hostile and provocative statement by Ronald Reagan, the BIA political commentator writes:

Evil political objectives and Washington's military strategy vis-a-vis the Asian countries — including the DRA — were reflected in this speech.

The people of Afghanistan are quite familiar with such speeches of Reagan in the past years. The U.S. President marks 21 March every year as so-called Afghanistan Day with a hostile speech and on this day he announced his promises of extended financial and military assistance to the extremists hostile to the Afghan Government in order to continue war and bloodshed in the DRA.

Contrary to what Reagan claims -- that he is defending the Afghan poeple's rights -- the sole objective of his statement is open hostility toward the people of Afghanistan and the continuation of war and bloodshed in the country.

Under circumstances where the DRA Revolutionary Government has announced a national reconciliation policy and a unilateral ceasefire to end the meaningless bloodshed, Reagan is making last-ditch efforts in order to continue murder and destruction in Afghanistan by his provocative promises to the extremists.

Hostility can be clearly noticed in the statement of R. Reagan against the earnest efforts of the DRA for a political solution of events around Afghanistan.

Despite all the sincere and peaceful efforts and political flexibility by Afghanistan, the Washington administration has promised the dispatch of 300 modern Stinger missiles, together with financial assistance totaling $670 million to the anti-Afghanistan Government extremists.

So far the Washington administration has given assistance of over $1.5 billion to the Afghan extremists. But what is the result?

The disaster of a civilian plane crash in the major district of Khowst -- shot down by a U.S. Stinger missile -- when 36 passengers, including children, women and innocent men were martyred is a vivid example of the White House boss' assistance to the extremists.

Washington has turned the territory of Pakistan into a military base for the advancement of its political and strategic objectives in Asia. Also, by sending a flood of the most modern weapons and by a military deal of $4.2 billion with Pakistan, Washington exerts pressure on the Islamabad regime to disrupt talks in Geneva between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

At the moment, the Washington administration knows very well that the people of Afghanistan and Afghan refugees outside the country support the national reconciliation policy. They are tired of war and want to live in peace. However, Washington tries to intensify war and bloodshed in Afghanistan with the promise of more money and the dispatch of modern weapons to the extremists.

Now the world public can judge: Who is the genuine enemy of the people of Afghanistan? From where do those who reject the national reconciliation policy gain their inspiration?

The enemies of the people of Afghanistan must know that the people of Afghanistan say yes to the national reconciliation policy for eradicating bloodshed and fratricide in the country; and by taking advantage of this humane policy they increasingly consolidate revolutionary sovereignty. Only shame and embarassment will remain for our enemies.

Presidium Issues Decree on Returnees' Property
LD240710 Kabul BAKHTAR in English 0427 GMT 24 Mar 87

[Text] Kabul, March 23, BAKHTAR — The Presidium of the Revolutionary Council of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan, DRA, has released a decree under which facilities will be provided for the restoration of goods of those Afghans who return home under the policy of national reconciliation.

The Decree has been issued on the basis of the Fundamental Principles of the DRA and declaration of the national reconciliation announced by the extra-ordinary session of the Revolutionary Council of the DRA on January 3, 1987.

Abu Nidal Guerrillas Reportedly Plan Hijacking

BK240528 Hong Kong AFP in English 0519 GMT 24 Mar 87

[Text] New Delhi, March 24 (AFP) — Airports in India have been put on a maximum security alert after intelligence agencies received reports that four Palestinian guerrillas had arrived here with plans to hijack a jet plane, officials said Tuesday.

The four guerrillas, from the Abu Nidal faction of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), were reported to have entered India sometime during the past 10 days with plans to hijack a passenger jet, intelligence officials said.

Indian authorities have received names and photographs of the would-be hijackers, who were said to have entered India with sophisticated weapons and explosives, the officials said quoting overseas intelligence reports.

Security has been reinforced at the offices here of several foreign airlines after Kuwait airlines authorities from Dubai confirmed the reports, local Airport Police Chief Virendra Rai told *Agence France-Presse*.

Indian intelligence agencies have questioned several local sympathisers of the Abu Nidal group, officials said.

President Challenges Gandhi on Consultation Issue

BK231536 Delhi INDIAN EXPRESS in English 13 Mar 87 p 1

[Text] New Delhi, March 12 -- The President, Mr Zail Singh, has challenged the veracity of the Prime Minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi's statements in Parliament earlier this month that he had been keeping the President briefed on important issues of national interest.

In a two-page letter written to Mr Gandhi on March 9, almost a week after the Prime Minister's interventions in Parliament during the debate on the President's address, the President says: "I appreciate the spirit behind your observations, which understandably is to put the issue of the relations between the head of the State and the head of the Government beyond controversy. But as you are aware, the factual position is somewhat at variance with what has been stated by you."

In his statement in the Lok Sabha on March 3, Mr Gandhi said that his Government had at no time violated Article 74 of the Constitution which provided for consultations between the President and Prime Minister. He said that he and his ministers had been meeting the President frequently, and "we have always consulted the President on issues of national importance."

"We want to keep him above politics," Mr Gandhi told the Lok Sabha. The next day, Mr Gandhi repeated the substance of these remarks in the Rajya Sabha amidst noisy interruptions from the opposition benches.

In his letter, the President speaks of "well-established practices and conventions, besides express provisions of the Indian Constitution," which govern relations between the two, and giving specific instance, says: "I am constrained to say that certain well-established conventions have not been followed."

The letter describes as "distressing" that the constitutional provision relating to furnishing certain information has not been followed.

The President alleges that while the Prime Minister accused the opposition of politicising the office of the President, it was a member of the ruling party who started this in April, 1985.

"I had brought it to your attention then that there was an emerging trend to drag in the President's office into political controversy. The member concerned was subsequently elevated to the Council of Ministers," the President writes.

It is understood that upon receipt of the letter, the Prime Minister has sought the opinion of the Law Minister, Mr A.K. Sen, and other ministers qualified to deal with legal matters.

The following is the text of the letter:

New Delhi
9th March 1987
My dear Rajiv,
I find that some Hon'ble Members of Parliament during the discussions in the two Houses on the motion of thanks on the President's address referred to the relations between the Prime Minister and the President. While replying to the points raised, you said amongst other things that the President has been briefed on important issues of national interest.

I appreciate the spirit behind your observations, which understandably is to put the issue of the relations between the head of the State and the head of the Government beyond controversy. But as you are aware, the factual position is somewhat at variance with what has been stated by you.

The President-Prime Minister relations in our country are governed by certain well-established practices and conventions besides express provisions of the Indian Constitution. I am constrained to say that certain well-established conventions have not been followed. Before your visit abroad and after your return I have not been briefed, to quote a specific instance after your visit to USA and stop over at Moscow, and your discussions with the top leaders of these super powers though I had requested you, at a banquet for a visiting dignatary, to let me know your impression to which you had agreed but I was not briefed. Similarly, I was given no briefing after the SAARC deliberations at Bangalore. In fact I have not been briefed on foreign policy issues relating to such of our immediate neighbours in South Asia with which there are outstanding problems.

You would recall that since you did not meet me after my visit to Nepal and subsequent visits to Yugoslavia, Greece and Poland, I sent you notes on my impressions of these visits. Even on certain important domestic issues I have not been kept informed on matters relating to accords finalised in respect of Assam, Punjab, and Mizoram. I was not briefed at any stage. On the other hand, when I had specifically requested you to meet me after my visit

to Jammu and Kashmir last year, there was no response from you.

It is also distressing that constitutional provisions regarding furnishing of information to the President have not been consistently followed. I have brought it to your notice that reports of some of commissions of enquiry had not been sent to me even long after their receipt by the Government. I specifically raised this point with the Home Minister when he came to obtain my assent to the Commission of Enquiry (Amendment) Bill 1986. I am yet to receive some of the reports promised by him.

You have also said in your reply in Parliament that the opposition is politicising the office of the President. In fact the politicisation was started by an Hon'ble Member of the ruling party in April, 1985. I had brought it to your attention then that there was an emerging trend to drag in the President's office into political controversy. The member concerned was subsequently elevated to the Council of Ministers.

It is not my intention to catalogue all such instances, but I do feel that if relations between the Prime Minister and the President are maintained in line with the letter and spirit of constitution, keeping national interest paramount, there will be no room for comment or speculation from any quarter. This delicate relationship has to be nurtured by mutual trust, concern for conventions and an emphatic and free exchange of views.

As you have already conveyed your view to Parliament, I felt I should convey to you the factual position on the subject.

With kind regards,
Yours sincerely,
(Zail Singh)
Shri Rajiv Gandhi
The Prime Minister of India
New Delhi

Further Reportage on 23 Mar Assembly Elections

'Minor Incidents' Cited

BK231637 Delhi Domestic Service in English
1530 GMT 23 Mar 87

[Excerpts] Heavy polling has been reported in the Assembly elections in three states — Kerala, Jammu and Kashmir, and West Bengal. In the by-elections in three Lok Sabha and eight Assembly constituencies held simultaneously in four states and the union territory of Pondicherry, moderate to heavy polling was recorded.

The polling was mostly peaceful except a few minor incidents of violence in which several persons were injured.

In Kerala, over 75 percent of about 1 crore 57 lakh voters exercised their franchise. A team of All India Radio correspondents, who went round various parts of the state, reports that the people were found to be very enthusiastic in casting their votes, braving the hot sun. However, in two different incidents of stabbing two persons are reported to have been killed.

Reports from most areas of Jammu and Kashmir indicate that about 65 percent votes were cast in today's election. The polling was higher in several rural areas than the urban. It started on a dull note and picked up by midday.

Addressing a joint press conference in Srinagar this evening, the chief electoral officer and the director general of police said in the valley there were about a dozen clashes between the supporters of some political parties. One vehicle was set on fire and three others damaged.

Repolling has been ordered in nine polling booths and some other constituencies. In Jammu division, a repoll has been ordered in two booths in Rajouri constituency. Polling in nine booths in (Tilail) area of Bandipur constituency has been postponed as election personnel could not reach there due to the heavy snowfall.

According to a preliminary official report, about 65 percent votes were cast in West Bengal. Announcing this at a press conference in Calcutta today, the chief minister, Mr Jyoti Basu, said police opened fire at College Street and Belgachia West to disperse violent mobs. Tear gas was used at Jora Bagan. The chief minister said practically no voting took place in three towns of Darjeeling hill subdivision. However, in some of the tea garden areas, votes were polled varying between 40 to 50 percent.

A repoll has been ordered at one booth of Dinhata constituency in Cooch Behar District where miscreants snatched away ballot papers. It will be held tomorrow.

Press Trust of India says a repoll has been ordered in seven booths of Jora Bagan constituency. Of the three parliamentary by-elections, Nanded in Maharashtra recorded 55 percent voting, followed by 50 percent in Hardwar in Uttar Pradesh and 40 percent in Secunderabad in Andhra Pradesh. [passage omitted]

Congress-I in West Bengal has demanded repolling in eight constituencies of Burdwan District. The state Congress-I Chief, Mr Priyaranjan Das Munshi, alleged that polling agents of his party were not allowed to enter any polling booths in these constituencies. Speaking to newsmen in Calcutta this evening, he alleged in many areas the party candidates and workers were intimidated. The chairman of the ruling left front, Mr Saroj Mukherjee, however, claimed that polling passed off peacefully. In a statement in Calcutta, Mr Mukherjee said despite grave provocations people remained calm and exercised their franchise.

8 Killed, 80 Injured in Kerala

BK240304 Delhi Domestic Service in English
0240 GMT 24 Mar 87

[Excerpt] In Kerala, 8 persons were killed and over 80 injured in post-poll violence yesterday. Six people were killed and over 40 injured in Trikkaripur constituency. Two persons were stabbed to death in Kozhikode and Malappuram Districts. Over 40 people were injured in stray clashes in different parts of the state. [passage omitted]

Election Trends Noted

BK241002 Delhi Domestic Service in English
0830 GMT 24 Mar 87

[Excerpts] Early trends from Kerala and Jammu and Kashmir [J&K] show that Left Democratic Front [LDF] candidates have established lead in the southern state and the Congress-I and National Conference Farooq nominees are ahead in J&K in the assembly elections held yesterday. No trend is available from West Bengal, which also went to the polls.

In Kerala, the opposition LDF is leading in 45 constituencies while the ruling UDF [United Democratic Front] is leading in 35 at the end of the second round of counting. [passage omitted]

The opposition LDF consists of CPI-M, CPI, Janata, Congress-W, Revolutionary Socialist Party, Lom Dal and Independents. The UDF consists of Congress-I, Muslim League, Kerala Congress-Mani, Kerala Congress-Joseph, National Democratic Party, Socialist Republican Party, and independents.

Early trends from Jammu and Kashmir indicate that the National Conference-Farooq-Congress-I alliance is leading in three constituencies in the Kashmir valley. In the Jammu division, the Congress-I candidates have established early lead in three constituencies and the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] in one.

The state chief minister and National Conference-F leader, Dr Farooq Abdullah, is leading over his MUF [Muslim United Front] rival by over 21,000 votes in the Ganderbal constituency. The agriculture minister, Mr Beli Ram, and the state BJP president, Mr Baldev Singh, are also leading.

In West Bengal, results of more than half of 294 seats will be known today itself. Reports reaching Calcutta say that the counting process began rather late at some centers following the delay in receipt of postal ballots. [passage omitted]

In the by-election held yesterday, the Congress-I has won Bahour reserved constituency in Pondicherry. The party candidate, Mr Rajalingam, defeated his nearest Janata Party rival, Mr P. Raja Velu, by margin of 919 votes. The Congress-I has wrested the seat from Janata Party, which held it for three consecutive terms from 1977.

In Uttar Pradesh, repolling has begun in eight polling stations in Patti assembly constituency and two booths in Rath constituency in the assembly by-elections. Repolling has also begun in Hardwar constituency in the Lok Sabha by-election. Polling at these places was suspended yesterday following incidents of booth capturing and violence. Counting of votes has begun in the Kashipur assembly constituency.

In Maharashtra, counting is on in the Nanded Lok Sabha constituency and Nilanga assembly constituency in the by-elections held yesterday.

In Andhra Pradesh, the Congress-I has won the Polavaram reserved constituency in the assembly by elections. The party candidate Mr B. Durga Rao defeated Telugu Desam candidate, Mr (Sirangana Dora), by a margin of over 4,300 votes. Counting in the other assembly constituency, Kalyandurg, is on. Counting of votes in the Secunderabad Lok Sabha constituency will be held tomorrow as repolling is on in two booths.

In Gujarat, counting has begun in the by-election to Modasa assembly constituency.

Here is a flash: The first result from Jammu and Kashmir has gone in favor of the Congress-I-National Conference-Farooq alliance. The chief minister and the National Conference-F leader, Dr Farooq Abdullah, was declared elected from Ganderbal constituency. He defeated his nearest rival, Mr Abdul Khaliq Sofi, of the Muslim United Front by a margin of over 22,000 votes.

Augmented Satellite Launch Vehicle Crashes

BK241244 Delhi Domestic Service in English
1234 GMT 24 Mar 87

[Text] The first developmental flight of the augmented satellite launch vehicle — ASLV — has failed. Minutes after blastoff from Sriharikota launch site it developed a snag and crashed into the sea. The chairman of the space commission, Dr U.R. Rao, told newsmen that the reason for the snag is being analyzed.

Our correspondent, Shesha Chandrika, reports that soon after the setback the ground station lost control of the movement of the launch vehicle.

The prime minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, who witnessed the launching, told newsmen that today's setback is only a small stumble after which ISRO [Indian Space Research Organization] will work harder to achieve its goal.

Afghan Aircraft Bombing Kills 51 in Kurram Agency

BK231542 Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu 1500 GMT 23 Mar 87

[Text] About 10 to 12 Kabul administration aircraft violated Pakistani airspace in Kurram Agency this afternoon and bombed the agency's headquarters in Teri Mengal near Parachinar.

The political representative of Kurram Agency told Radio Pakistan's Peshawar correspondent this evening that according to the initial reports 51 people were killed and more than 100 were wounded in this bombing. About 60 shops, some houses, and a school were also damaged. The wounded were immediately sent to the Kurram Agency headquarters hospital and other hospitals, whereas the seriously wounded are being transferred to Peshawar.

Kills 21 in South Waziristan

BK241020 Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu 1000 GMT 24 Mar 87

[Text] Twenty-two people were killed and 26 others injured yesterday morning by Afghan aircraft bombing the Ankur base near Wana in South Waziristan.

A Defense Ministry spokesman told radio Pakistan's representative this morning that six Afghan aircraft at about 0930 hours [0430 GMT] violated Pakistan's airspace in South Waziristan Agency and dropped numberous bombs on the (?central market) in the Ankur base. Among the dead are 11 Pakistanis. The injured were immediately rushed to the Wana hospital. Three of the seriously injured were sent to Peshawar and one to the Tank hospital.

Fifty-one people were killed and more than 100 injured by the Afghan aircraft bombing Teri Mangal near Parachinar yesterday afternoon.

Lahore Bomb Blast Kills 6 at Political Rally

BK240552 Hong Kong AFP in English 0544 GMT 24 Mar 87

[Text] Islamabad, March 24 (AFP) — Six people were killed and nearly 100 injured early Tuesday when a bomb exploded in a political meeting at Lahore in eastern Pakistan, reports said.

Correspondents in the area said the bomb went off around midnight local time (1900 GMT) at a politico-religious meeting called by the Anjuman Ahle Hadith fringe party.

Party leader Ihsan Ilahi Zahir, a speaker at the meeting, was among the wounded and was taken to hospital, police and hospital sources told reporters.

Monday saw several political meetings in Lahore. Correspondents said the party attacked was critical of the government but had not joined the extra-parliamentary coalition called the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy.

Officials Condemn Incident

BK240828 Karachi Overseas Service in English 0800 GMT 24 Mar 87

[Text] In the Punjab provincial assembly today, identical adjournment motions moved by Rana Phool Mohammad Khan, Mian Mahmud Ahmad, and Sardar Nasrullah Khan Darishak about the bomb explosion in a meeting in Lahore last night were held in order by the speaker. The provincial agriculture minister, Chaudhry Abdul Ghafoor, said the government strongly condemns the incident and fully sympathizes with the bereaved families. He said some persons have died and a number of others injured.

Condemning it, the chief minister, Mr Nawaz Sharif, described the incident as highly deplorable. He said he has directed the authorities to trace out the culprits. The speaker said discussion on the subject matter of adjournment motions will be held for 2 hours on Thursday [26 March]. The house was adjourned for 10 minutes to express sympathies with those who lost their lives.

Zimbabwe's Mugabe Ends Visits, Departs 23 March

BK240318 Karachi Domestic Service in Urdu 0200 GMT 24 Mar 87

[Text] Zimbabwean Prime Minister Robert Mugabe was given a very warm send-off when he left Islamabad last night following a 4-day official visit to Pakistan. Prime Minister Mohammad Khan Junejo, Senate Chairman Ghulam Ishaq Khan, federal ministers, Parliament members, members of the diplomatic corps, and others bade him farewell at the airport.

Talking to newsmen prior to his departure for Harare, Mugabe said that his talks with the Pakistani prime minister to consolidate relations between Pakistan and Zimbabwe have been very useful. These talks will be followed up at the Pakistan-Zimbabwe joint commission meeting which will be held soon. He expressed confidence that this will formally mark the start of Pakistan-Zimbabwe cooperation in various fields. He said that the two countries are already cooperating in a number of fields and all possible efforts will be made to accelerate and stabilize the bilateral cooperation.

Mugabe said that they also exchanged views on the activities of the Nonaligned Movement and the modalities for achieving its objectives.

Referring to the regional security environment, he said that they held detailed discussions on ways to ensure the stabilization of peace and security in the region as well as the entire world.

On Pakistan-India relations, Mugabe felt that the tension between Pakistan and India has subsided and there is understanding between the two countries. He said that as the chairman of the Nonaligned Movement he likes to see resolution of any situation of confrontation anywhere in the world through discussions. The Zimbabwean prime minister said that the United States and the Soviet Union should also adopt such a perspective to ensure international peace and security.

Majlis Speaker Comments on Hormuz Strait, USSR Ties
LD241335 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian
1030 GMT 24 Mar 87

["Exclusive" interview with Majlis Speaker Hashemi-Rafsanjani by unidentified Central News Unit correspondent following Hashemi-Rafsanjani's 24 March visit with wounded soldiers at Tehran's Firuzgar Hospital — recorded]

[Text] [Correspondent] Mr Hashemi-Rafsanjani, you visited the wounded today in the hospital. How did you find their morale and how do you assess the efforts being made by the doctors?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. This was a good opportunity to be able to visit the war wounded today. I am grateful and thank God for this opportunity, especially as it was possible in the aftermath of the New Year.

Generally, I am satisfied with what I saw here. No matter where one goes, one sees high morale. The fact is, it is they who raise our morale. Fortunately, the wounded in the hospital are satisfied with the way in which the hospital is being run; they are satisfied with the nurses, doctors, and private surgeons.

Indeed, we are pleased to see the devotion to duty by our medical staff; we have noticed this over the past few months. This will encourage our warriors. We hope, God willing, to be able to reward our doctors, specialists, surgeons, and administrators for the services they perform not only at the front but elsewhere as well. Just like our warriors and others, they consider themselves to be part of this revolution.

[Correspondent] Mr Hashemi-Rafsanjani, there is something else I wish to raise, and that is a topic being discussed throughout the world at the moment. The United States has claimed that the Islamic Republic of Iran has installed missiles in the Strait of Hormuz and adjoining areas. The United States has also threatened to stay there to prevent this. As the representative of his holiness the imam to the Supreme Defense Council and the esteemed speaker of the Majlis, please let us know your views on these U.S. claims and threats.

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] There is a special reason why this issue is being raised now. This is not something new. If the United States did not know until now that we have land-based antiship missiles in the region, this is a sign of their excessive weakness. We have had land-based antiship missiles on our coast for a long time. We do not know, however, why the United States is raising this issue now.

I can only say that this is one of the signs of U.S. desperation, in the same way that their earlier hue and cry was another sign of desperation -- when they wished to get out of their desperation by establishing relations with us. We demonstrated, and our stance made this clear, that the United States is not trustworthy. This was a blow to them. And the Arab world, the world of Arab reactionaries, has realized that the United States is not a good master. If the United States finds another country, then she will drop them, she will sacrifice their interests. I think that to make up for this political blow, the United States raised a hue and cry, saying that she is their supporter. Of course, there is nothing genuine about this hue and cry, in the same way that there was nothing genuine about the former hue and cry. There was nothing sincere in the U.S. position then as there is nothing sincere about it now. To deceive others at different junctures they make use of the same Satanic quality. The principle concern for the United States in the region is Israel, and it makes no difference whether the other side is Arab or Iranian.

Only one issue became clear in this affair: Iran is more important to the United States than the Arab countries. The Arabs realize that if we give the United States the green light, then the United States will not be too attached to them. Now, what can the United States do in all this tumult? In my view, this is mainly a hue and cry.

The United States recently sent us a message through the embassy in charge of their interests here, the Swiss Embassy in Tehran, and drew our attention to two topics: One topic was this issue of missiles, and the other was about the issue of Lebanon — their hostages in Lebanon.

Of course, our Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not accept their reminder and said that the United States has no right to give us such a warning. The reason for that is also very clear: We are more interested in the security of the Strait of Hormuz than others. The United States has no legitimate presence there. We have the longest shore, the greatest interests. The countries along the southern shores have much less interest than we have. Naturally, we wish to protect the security of the Strait of Hormuz more than others. If the Strait of Hormuz were to be closed, there would be no need for missiles, for we can close it with our artillery. We have also said this in the past. We mainly use our missiles elsewhere.

In addition to whether the Strait of Hormuz is open or closed, the entire Persian Gulf is within our range of fire. The Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf are places where we have our warships and frigates, our helicopters, our aircraft; our artillery is stationed in many places and our boats often go on patrol there. This hue and cry will not solve anything.

As for Lebanon, we previously announced to the United States that if you are really willing to have your hostages released and expect us to help you, and even though we have no responsibility toward you, we do have moral influence and we can help you. However, we made our help conditional: that they should give us our assets that they have usurped and withheld for the past 7 or 8 years, still charging us for storage. They should return our assets, then they can expect us to help them. So, if the United States really wishes to save their hostages they should stop acting as usurpers.

In the Persian Gulf, too, the way to security is quite clear: The United States must stop the evil acts of the Iraqis. We only retaliate there; we are engaged in preventative measures. We did not start it. If they really wish the Persian Gulf to be safe, it is enough for them to stop giving missiles to Iraq, for France not to give Exocets, for the Soviet Union not to give them long-range missiles. The Iraqis are completely under their command. They

should tell Iraq not to engage in adventurism. Then there would be no need for us to take retaliatory action in the Persian Gulf.

Some Arab countries have invited the United States to come there — if they really wish to have security this is not the way to achieve it. What kind of security can the United States provide in the Persian Gulf? If it is the fate of the U.S. Marines to provide food for the whales of the Persian Gulf, then the only way for them is to come here.

What can the United States do in the Gulf? There are thousands of miles between here and the United States. How can the United States prepare for a war in the Persian Gulf? A few aircraft may fly from an aircraft carrier and bomb somewhere. But this cannot be called a war. What results did the Iraqis achieve as the result of all that bombing they carried out here?

The United States came to Tabas once, and look what happened. The storms of the Persian Gulf are much stronger than those in Tabas. We are better prepared now. In any case, those countries that give the United States the green light to come, they too will not benefit. Both their nations, the people of the region as well as us, realize how vile they are, that for the sake of a political move they enable a superpower to step into the region. Furthermore, the United States is so vulnerable throughout the world that they will not dare get involved in an adventure here. If such a thing were to happen, God forbid, then the United States will face insecurity throughout the world. The events of Lebanon could be repeated elsewhere for the United States. Of course, we do not wish such a thing to happen, and we are not threatening them.

We remind the American people to tie the hands of their leaders to some extent. At the moment, they are off balance; they are faced with a political crisis at home. Perhaps it is to hide their internal problems that they raise these issues. This will not be in the U.S. interest. The U.S. defense secretary will not achieve anything as the result of the threats that he has made. It will not help them with their internal political problems.

[Correspondent] The propaganda mouthpieces of the United States and others have said that the Islamic Republic of Iran has placed two listening stations at the disposal of the Soviet Union in return for receiving 200 missiles from that country. Could you please inform us on this issue?

[Hashemi-Rafsanjani] The issue of placing listening stations is an insinuation by imperialists. After the revolution, we took over U.S. listening posts. No country in the world can claim today that it has even the smallest center here or a place it can use for this purpose, and that includes the Soviet Union. Basically, the superpowers will not have a place in Iran, even in the future.

With regard to the missile issue, we have been a missile power in the region for a long time. There is no need for us to receive missiles from the Soviets. When our first missile hit Baghdad, we announced that Iran should be regarded as a missile power from then on. Sometimes they say that we are receiving our missiles from China, and sometimes they say we have received them from the Russians. Of course, there are certain things that we receive from abroad, but the rumors have imperialist roots, and they are pursuing particular political objectives.

[Correspondent] Thank you.

Khomeyni Receives Qom, Tehran 'Martyrs' Families

LD211215 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 21 Mar 87

[Text] At the start of the New Year, the families of martyrs, those missing-in-action, POWs and the maimed from the cities of Qom, Esfahan and Dorcheh, and a group of families of martyrs, the missing-in-action and POWs from Tehran, were received this morning by Imam Khomeyni in Hoseyniyeh Jamaran.

First, a choir of the Qom Martyrs Foundation of the Islamic Revolution sang, and then Hojjat ol-Eslam Karrubi, the imam's representative and supervisor of the Martyrs Foundation of the Islamic Revolution, recalled some of the successes and great victories of the Iranian nation during the past year. He praised the self-sacrifices and devotion of martyrs, those missing, POWs, and the maimed and their families, wished success to the combatants on the battlefronts, and then delivered his excellency the imam's appreciation, thanks, congratulations and condolences to them.

At the close of the meeting the imam of the ummah responded to the audience's display of emotion.

Musavi, Others Attend Meeting With Khamene'i

LD211231 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 21 Mar 87

[Text] Prime Minister Mir Hoseyn Musavi, accompanied by members of the cabinet, met President Khamene'i this morning. According to a report by our correspondent, at this meeting the prime minister, while expressing felicitations for the start of the New Year on behalf of the members of the cabinet and on his own behalf, said:

Last year was the year for endeavors of all cabinet members. However, all these endeavors and efforts are nothing when compared with the self-sacrifice of the forces of Islam at the battlefront of light against darkness. We hope that the guidance and leadership of the imam of the ummah, the president and the members of the clergy, which have always provided us with valuable guidelines, will continue in the coming year and that this year will be the year of victory in war for us.

Khamene'i also expressed his reciprocal felicitations to the cabinet members and said: Despite the fact that we were faced with a number of problems, such as the oil issue, the bombing of the cities, and floods in the past year, the brothers in the cabinet worked hard and we had greater victories and successes.

Continuing his speech, Khamene'i regarded the presence of the Hezbollahi ummah of our country in all the arenas, especially at the fronts, the dispatch of the army of Muhammad -- God's salutation and benediction be upon him and his scion -- and the forces of Mahdi -- may God hasten his glad advent -- as signs of the self-sacrifice of the people and their constant presence upon

the scene. He expressed his hope that the government will have a successful and blissful year ahead of it.

According to the same report, this morning the commanders of the Islamic Republic of Iran's armed forces were also received by President Khamene'i and expressed their New Year greetings to the president. According to the report, the gathering of the commanders included Colonel Sohrabi, chief of the Joint Staff of the Armed Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran; the commanders of the three forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran; Colonel Jalali, minister of defense; Brigadier General Zahirnezhad and Colonel Sayyad-Shirazi, representatives of the imam to the Supreme Defense Council; and the ideological-political directors of the three armed forces. The chairman of the Supreme Defense Council expressed his greetings for the New Year and expressed his hope for the victory of the fighters of Islam.

President Khamene'i said: I hope that the New Year will be the year for greater victories, successes, and pride for the armed forces. During the past year the armed forces succeeded in demonstrating their strength and their firm belief at the battlefronts. Fortunately, these days we are celebrating the New Year under conditions when the sweet memory of the victories of the armed forces in "Karbala'-7" is fresh in our minds.

The president added: The unity of the armed forces can continue this process. As the imam of the ummah stressed both in his recent speech and in his New Year message, the issue of unity is more important to us than anything else. Khamene'i said: As someone who is familiar with the virtues of the armed forces, I should say that the armed forces have achieved an outstanding position during this great test. If anyone wishes to make a fair judgement he should say that the armed forces have been able to successfully accomplish the duty which has been placed upon their shoulders.

The chairman of the Supreme Defense Council said: We will have many more exhilarating encounters ahead of us when all three forces — the ground forces, the Air Force, and the Navy — should be very active. During this year, all the military brothers should be active in all spheres, even in the sphere of organizing the administrative structure of the armed forces.

At the end of his speech, Khamene'i said: I hope that the New Year will be a successful and proud year for you, and your success and pride is, in fact, the success and pride of the nation.

Khamene'i Arrives in Khorasan, Tours Mashhad

LD221447 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian
1030 GMT 22 Mar 87

[Excerpts] A Central News Unit correspondent reports about President Khamene'i's visit to Mashhad:

On the 1st day of spring and the New Year, President Khamene'i, the chairman of the Supreme Defense Council, arrived in Mashhad accompanied by a number of aides. They were welcomed by the representative of the imam to Khorasan and custodian of the Holy Imam Reza shrine, the Friday imam of Mashhad, a number of provincial Friday imams and mass prayers imams, teachers and students of the seminary, Majlis deputies, Shari'ah judges, directors general and head of departments, labor officials and Islamic societies, as well as trade societies and bazaar traders, and also a number of speech and sermon-givers.

Continuing with his tour, this morning President Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i, the chairman of the Supreme Defense Council, met with a group of families of esteemed martyrs, POWs, and missing in action, and selfless forces at the hall of the Holy Shrine of the Holy Imam Reza attended by Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Va'ez-Tabasi, the representative of the imam and guardian of the Shrine of Holy Imam Reza, as well as the Khorasan governor-general. [passage omitted]

The chairman of the Supreme Defense Council, noting the objectives of the Islamic Republic of Iran in continuing the war, said: Today, we want to put in their place the enemies who threaten us and then turn our attention to rebuilding. Today, the real independence of the country has been realized, as no power in the world, be it political, financial and military, has any influence at all with this God-fearing nation. What exists as an instinctive reistance in our people is not the sort that leaders of the West or the East and supporters of Baghdad may understand. Reliance on and belief in God are not issues that elements of blasphemy can understand and gain means to confront them. Social stratum [as heard] must act in line with self-correction and we must be mindful of ourselves. Victory is with us.

A report by our correspondent indicates that at midday today President Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i, the chairman of the Supreme Defense Council, made a suprise visit to Martyr Kamiab Emergency Hospital in Mashhad and met the war-wounded there. The president, praising and encouraging the esteemed injured, presented flowers and Holy Korans and prayed for their speedy recovery.

Delivers Address at Shrine

LD222014 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian
1630 GMT 22 Mar 87

[Text] President Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i, chairman of the Supreme Defense Council, who is visiting Khorasan Province, this afternoon attended a gathering of various classes of the people of Mashhad and pilgrims to the holy shrine of the eighth imam, peace be upon him, at the Imam Khomeyni courtyard. Amidst shouts of war, war until victory from the audience, he made a speech.

In his 75-minute speech, referring to the strength of the Islamic Republic, which is unrecognized by Eastern and Western analysts, he said: Nowadays, satellites are reporting that our missiles are pointed at the Persian Gulf. This part of our strength; many aspects of the strength of our revolution, inspired by the spiritual and materialistic strength of our nation, are still not understood by our enemies.

He said that the Persian Gulf belongs to the countries of the region and that as the Islamic Republic of Iran has the longest coastline, it has every right to maintain security there.

He then expressed regret over the Kuwaiti Government's welcoming an extended U.S. military presence in the region. He added: Will America's presence bring security? The security of the region must be maintained by Persian Gulf countries. We have the power, and with God's blessings, we shall smite any power which wishes to violate our waters and lands.

He then described the conditions surrounding the revolution. He said: Last year was one of the most difficult years. The enemies of Islam used everything at their disposal, such as increasing the price of oil, bombing cities and assassinations. Natural events, such as earthquakes, caused a great deal of damage. But on the war and political fronts, despite all problems, our victories were evident. If we were to sum up we would see that what makes our great nation invulnerable and strong is faith and unity and the presence of the nation on the scene. With full readiness we must continue our legitimate course, with strength, in other possible events. [as heard]

He then described the destructive and troublesome role of world arrogance against revolutions in the world and the need to follow the right course to combat such bullying. He said: Our revolution is Islamic; therefore, it is a bigger target for arrogant powers. However, such attacks cannot last long. Those powers exert pressure when there is a chance of crushing a nation, but when they realize that this nation is unbreakable they admit defeat. He added: Today, efforts by our enemies are less enthusiastic. Without doubt, the future will not be harder than the past.

In another part of his speech, the chairman of the Supreme Defense Council compared the present sociopolitical issues with those in the early days of Islam. He said: Society in those days was nothing like it is now, but the development and modus operandi of the Muslims is the same.

He then asked the people to make a serious effort to foil the hypocritical actions by the mercenaries of world arrogance who try to shake the foundations of the people's faith and destroy the enthusiasm and resistance of the people. While stressing the need for unity of expression and more and more cohesion among the Muslim ummah, addressing the Muslim people of Iran, he said: Our principal issue is unity and solidarity among all classes of the nation. A nation which can defend itself is triumphant. That is why the enemy is constantly trying to create dissension due to their ignorance and negligence. In accordance with Islamic sayings, one should know that creating a rift is wrong, ad anyone who creates a rift is evil. Therefore, if you see anyone moving in that direction, you should isolate him. More than ever, our nation needs unity of expression. God willing, this year will be the year of unity among the various classes of the people and among all the country's officials.

He finally referred to the seriousness of the war issue and the need to continue it until final victory. He said: The war imposed on us by our enemies can only be crushed [as heard] with effort and resistance. There can be no end to the war except through the destruction of Saddam and of the Ba'thist, 'Aflaqi party. We must not accept Saddam's empty promise — he wants to prevent his definite defeat with a peace plan. Our people should strive to annihilate this Saddamite crime, more enthusiastically than ever, hand in hand with the combatants of Islam.

Comments on War With Iraq

LD231410 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1030 GMT 23 Mar 87

[Excerpts] Our correspondent reports on President Khamene'i's remarks in a gathering of Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims in Birjand. [passage omitted]

The president and chairman of the Supreme Defense Council explained the reasons behind the imposition of the war on the Islamic Republic, saying: If, as dictated by the superpowers, Iraq had not waged this war, then Islamic Republic officials would never have given the slightest excuse to anyone to start a war. We were convinced that our country needed a creative, comprehensive and all-embracing effort; that war would create an obstacle against our constructive activities. However, being scared of the flourishing of the Islamic Revolution, our enemies imposed this war on us. Consequently, our nation has no alternative but to resist and then continue the war until a final victory is achieved and Saddam is removed from political arena. [passage omitted]

Continues Visit to Khorasan

LD232133 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian 1630 GMT 23 Mar 87

[Text] Our correspondent reports on President Khamene'i's continuing tour in Khorasan Province: Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i, the president and chairman of the Supreme Defense Council, continuing his trip to Khorasan Province, this evening arrived in Qa'en and was warmly welcomed by the people and responsible officials of this town.

After his arrival, at a gathering of families of martyrs, the POWs, the missing in action, and the selfless warriors, the president, while paying tribute to the martyrs of the region, said: Despite the poverty in this region, the people of Qa'en and the region of Qa'enat, as in other towns and cities of the Islamic homeland of Iran, made great efforts. All through the sensitive stages of the revolution and the war, these people, by being present in the arena of struggle and battlefields, sacrificed their lives to assist the Islamic revolution.

Referring to the failure of the world analysts to understand the existing realities, the president said: The Islamic revolution cannot be analyzed by material standards and material rules cannot measure or understand the power motivating the families of the martyrs from remote cities and the oppressed to maintain such a high morale and to continue chanting "War, war, until victory."

Afterwards, the president described the value and status of martyrdom as viewed by Islam, and referring to the unprecedented resistance morale of the martyr-nurturing people of Iran, emphasized: Thanks to the high morale and determination of the people, the Islamic Republic will last and no power can harm it. This revolution, with the support and endeavor of the people, has found its true place among the deprived nations of the world today; and this nation deserves victory and shall continue its steadfastness and battle until the final victory.

In conclusion, the chairman of the Supreme Defense Council, addressing the families of the martyrs, said: I bring these glad tidings to you, the families of the martyrs, that the reward for the blood of your children is nothing but total victory by the combatants of Islam and the collapse of the 'Aflaqi party ruling over Iraq; and the warriors of Islam shall bring you, the families of the martyrs, the gift of the final victory.

Montazeri Meets With Agriculture, PTT Ministers

LD231221 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian
1030 GMT 23 Mar 87

[Text] The Central News Unit reports that in the last 2 days Post, Telegraph and Telephone Minister Gharazi and Agriculture Minister Zali met separately with Grand Ayatollah Montazeri and discusses the performance of the two ministries. Grand Ayatollah Montazeri in turn made the appropriate recommendations.

Interior Minister Tours Ilam Province Front Lines

LD231229 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian
1030 GMT 23 Mar 87

[Text] According to a Central News Unit report from Ilam, Interior Minister Mohtashami and his entourage visited the fronts in Ilam Province during the past few days. He met with combatants of Islam on the front lines during the equinox.

Then, at a gathering of the combatants of Islam, while expressing New Year's greetings, in connection with the great mission of the Islamic revolution and the cursed plots of world arrogance, he said: Today, the superpowers feel that the mission and message of the Islamic revolution break all barriers, cross all borders and awaken Muslim nations. Therefore, the enemy has prepared itself to stand against our Islamic revolution with all its might. But God's promise is true, and we hope that this year will be the year of the victory of good over evil and of the dear combatants of Islam over the Zionist enemy.

According to this report, while accompanied by the governor-general of Ilam and governors of Mehran and Dehloran, Mr Mohtashami inspected the front at the Dehloran border. While commissioning a number of operational bases in the Dehloran sector, he praised the forces of monotheism for their epic-making achievements.

After meeting with the resisting people of Ilam, the interior minister and his entourage left that town yesterday afternoon.

Velayati Sends Message to Pakistan on National Day

NC230634 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian
0430 GMT 23 Mar 87

[Text] According to a Central News Unit report, Foreign Minister Velayati has sent a congratulatory message to his Pakistani counterpart, Mr Sahabzada Yaqub Khan, to mark the occasion of Pakistan's national day on 23 March.

The message states: I hope that the long-standing Iranian-Pakistani relations, which stem from our common and deep religious, cultural, and historic roots, will be strengthened daily. I hope that these ties will continue to be expanded through our joint efforts and cooperation. I take this opportunity to pray to God Almighty for your excellency's health and for the victory and prosperity of the Muslim and brother Pakistani nation.

Delegation Attends National Day at Leipzig Fair

LD210952 Tehran IRNA in English 0915 GMT 21 Mar 87

[Text] Tehran, March 21 IRNA — The national day of the Islamic Republic of Iran was celebrated at Leipzig's international fair in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) on Friday. High-ranking East German officials including two ministers participated in the ceremony.

Speaking at the event, Iranian ambassador to East Germany Hamid Asefi outlined the Islamic Republic's independent policies and announced Tehran's interest in establishing healthy relations with other countries.

Another speaker was visiting Iranian Deputy Industries Minister Rahim Kolahduz Esfahani who elaborated on Iran's success in the industrial field since the victory of the 1979 Islamic revolution.

There are various industrial and traditional goods as well as a large number of books in German and Arabic on display in Iran's pavilion at the fair.

On the fifth day of the fair, an Iranian carpet won a gold medal for its high quality.

Meanwhile, the visiting Iranian economic delegation headed by the deputy industries minister left East Berlin for Tehran at the end of its five-day visit Friday.

Among topics discussed between the Iranian delegation and East German officials were expansion of Iran-GDR commercial and technical relations and the upcoming session of the joint Tehran-East Berlin Economic Commission due to be held in Tehran soon.

Reportage on Combat Operations in War With Iraq

Fath-IV Operations

LD231139 Tehran Domestic Service in Persian
1030 GMT 23 Mar 87

[Text] According to reports from Ramadan Headquarters, guerrilla forces under that command, compromising brave combatants of the special Guards Brigade and the heroic Peshmerga of the Patriotic Union of Iraqi Kordestan last night staged the third phase of the operation Fath-IV.

During the operation, which was staged 70 km inside Iraq, in the region east of Irbil Province, radar and observation posts on the (Kurak) Heights, which had previously been attacked by the combatants of Islam and which the Zionist enemy was busily

repairing, were again brought under heavy fire by the forces under the command of Ramadan Headquarters and suffered heavy damage. Three bases of the Ba'thist, Zionist regime of Iraq on those heights were destroyed.

During the operation, the base of a brigade of the Zionist enemy, which was assigned to safeguard the Khalifan region, was brought under fire by the Ramadan Headquarters forces. Dozens of Zionist enemy troops were killed or injured. The destruction of several bases of the Zionist enemy near the Khalifan region and the setting alight of ammunition dumps and equipment were among the other results of this successful operation.

After completing the operation, the forces under the command of Ramadan Headquarters all returned safely to their bases.

Bakhtaran Operations Detailed

LD231406 Tehran IRNA in English 1350 GMT 23 Mar 87

[Text] Bakhtaran, March 23, IRNA — Three Iraqi group bunkers, three observation posts and two vehicles were destroyed by the effective fire of Muslim combatants in Bakhtaran war fronts over the past 24 hours.

In other battle front action exchange of heavy artillery fire continued in most other war fronts and a number of enemy troops were killed and wounded.

Communique No 2,784

LD231547 Tehran IRNA in English 1538 GMT 23 Mar 87

[Text] Tehran, March 23, IRNA — The Muslim forces of Iran stationed in northwestern fronts consolidated positions taken over from the Iraqi forces in Karbala'-7 operational theater and silenced enemy artillery fire, said the Joint Staff Command in its 2,784th communique issued here Monday evening.

The Muslim combatants of Iran, added the communique, by dispatching some 20 patrol units and through keeping enemy fortifications and supply roads under artillery fire destroyed several Iraqi positions and killed and wounding a number of them.

The Muslim forces of Iran maintained their full control throughout the operational region in western fronts, added the Communique.

The Iranian forces in southern fronts in addition to their continuous defence activities including building embankments and consolidating their positions, and through heavy barrage, destroyed several enemy positions and killed and wounded a number of others.

During the past 24 hours the Gendarmerie forces in southern fronts kept enemy positions and convoys under fire, destroying seven vehicles, a number of trenches and a munitions depot, and killing or wounding scores of enemy forces, it concluded.

Communique No 2,785

LD241529 Tehran IRNA in English 1525 GMT 24 Mar 87

[Text] Tehran, March 24, IRNA — Iranian naval forces intercepted three foreign cargo vessels and warships in the Hormuz Strait Monday and Tuesday but allowed them to continue voyage once being satisfied they were not carrying any suspicious cargo, said Communique No. 2785 of the Joint Staff Command here Tuesday.

Exchange of artillery and mortar fire continued throughout the fronts, raging more heavily in Karbala'-7 operational region, Qasr-e Shirin and east of Basra in the southern fronts, said the communique.

In northwestern fronts an Iraqi munitions depot, two personnel carriers with their crew and a heavy missile launchers were totally destroyed and scores of enemy troops were killed or wounded, according to the communique.

The communique said Iranian Muslim combatants destroyed a huge munitions dump and 10 gun emplacements of the enemy forces in western fronts, setting afire parts of their defence lines in the region. Anti-aircraft fire of the Muslim combatants also forced Iraqi helicopter gunships to flee from Mehran operational region, it added.

In the southern fronts, the communique said, Iranian forces silenced fire of Iraqi armoured units, inflicting some losses on them.

Meanwhile, Iranian Gendarmerie forces totally destroyed six Iraqi individual and group bunkers and three military vehicles, killing or wounding a number of enemy soldiers.